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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 000133

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WHA/CAR FOR LAURA LUFTIG AND MATHEW BUFFINGTON, ISN/RA FOR
RICHARD NEPHEW, AND EB, NEA, IO, VCI, P, T, AND TREASURY-TFI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/20/2017
TAGS: [PREL](#) [NS](#) [KNNP](#) [IR](#)
SUBJECT: IRAN: AS USUAL, SURINAME LARGELY SILENT ON
INTERNATIONAL ISSUE

REF: A. SECSTATE 14071
[1](#)B. SECSTATE 23001
[1](#)C. SECSTATE 24344
[1](#)D. PARAMARIBO 802

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: According to an official at the government of Suriname,s (GOS) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Suriname has no position with regard to pressuring Iran on UNSCR 1737 or nuclear proliferation. Typically for Suriname, the official was reluctant to express clear positions and sought to frame Suriname,s position in the framework of CARICOM * Suriname,s primary international policy goal is to avoid conflict--for itself. END SUMMARY

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[1](#)2. (C) MFA Head of the Americas Division Terence Craig (protect) said that Suriname has no position on pressuring Iran at this time, but that it might possibly develop one in conjunction with CARICOM (NOTE: This is nothing more than a stalling tactic). If so, according to Craig this position would be developed by CARICOM Ambassadors caucusing in New York. When asked whether its CARICOM positions sometimes conflict with its positions as a member of other organizations such as the Islamic Conference, Craig said Suriname will likely seek to abstain from the Islamic Conference on this issue, and that abstention is its favored strategy in such instances. Craigsaid that in principal Suriname stands for peace, security, and non-proliferation, and is in sympathy with the international community in opposition to the Iranian nuclear program. Craig said Suriname has little or no contact with Iran, or for that matter with any country in the Middle East. Craig said that if Suriname wishes to contact Iran or vice versa, they communicate via the Iranian Embassy in Caracas.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: PolOff conducted a wide ranging discussion with Craig in seeking information on Suriname,s attitude towards Iran. Having been stymied in numerous other attempts to receive a reaction--any reaction--to a demarche (ref D), PolOff first sought to ask questions rather than deliver points. While this led to a lengthy discussion (which Craig referred to as &brainstorming8), essentially the outcome was the same: if the GOS does have a position, it doesn't want to say what it is, and would prefer to take no position at all. Morevoer, officials in Paramaribo may not know what is being decided by GOS officials in New York. Craig detailed his personal theory of involvement, and it is a handy summary of GOS MFA modus operandi: by not getting involved in issues, Suriname maintains sovereignty and room to maneuver. In other words, we expect that Suriname will

continue to avoid taking a position on international issues
whenever possible. END COMMENT

SCHREIBER HUGHES